

Support Activities of CIA

Notes on a Talk Given by Colonel Lawrence K. White, Deputy Director (Support), to the Clandestine Services Review Class on 3 October 1960

The DD(S) hopes to support CIA activities rather than to tell people what they cannot do, Colonel Lawrence K. White told the thirtieth class in "Clandestine Services Review" on 3 October 1960. Although the support components' overall mission includes assuring that activities are legal, they are fundamentally a service organization, the primary function of which is to render support.

Colonel White said that he thought of himself as the head of a group of functional specialists. He coordinates their activities and sometimes directs the specialists. Each office has a command or line responsibility. Since it is also part of the Director's staff, it also has staff responsibilities. Support people serve in all components of CIA everywhere in the world. For instance, the DD(S) supplies all the personnel officers regardless of where they are stationed. But although on the staff of a chief of station, their long-range looking is to headquarters.

Unless students had been overseas for a long time, they would on return notice no great organization changes in DD(S). Only one significant change had come since 1955 - moving the commercial staff back to the Clandestine Services on 1 February 1960. The question involved where the staff could best function. The desire was to use it. There was much pro and con argument, for instance, as to where proprietaries could best be used. With increasing effort for more non-official cover, evidently such things as proprietaries belonged in the Clandestine Services. There was no hassle about the shift.

It is impossible to consider present problems without looking at those in the past, said Colonel White. When he took over originally, administration was looked on as something of a police force. That was bad. There was no interchange between operating and support services. A change in attitude from policing to servicing was needed. The required emphasis was on finding better ways to help operating units do the job. As a result of the change, he said that he hoped that members of the class had seen improvement in the support given them. If there had been improvement, the DD(S) evidently had not spent all its time writing regulations. Bigness of the Agency does require regulations; progress, however, is made through people.

The attempt is to get people to serve primarily in support of the Clandestine Services and of field operations, Colonel White said. The DD(I) is easy to support; the Clandestine Services require more work and great flexibility. The negative role of you can't do this and you can't do that has gone by the board in DD(S). On the theory that the more direct the work, the more efficient, there are no big staffs in the offices to complicate matters. A maximum cutting of corners gets the job done. The key to direct action is the chief of support in the division. To him is the place where Clandestine Services personnel should go.

In Finance there is a need for greater cost consciousness, Colonel White said. Pressure from all sides is to do more with less. So far, Congress has given the Agency what it needs. But Congressional and other scrutiny continues and is on the increase. The answer is to improve efficiency. In that, cost consciousness is a big factor. It is great stuff if an operating unit can get material for a project for nothing, but the project is not insured against inefficiency. When cost comes out of the budget of the unit, however, efficiency is likely to be the password all down the line. And in the end, costs are coming out of the taxpayers' pockets.

In logistics there is need for greater understanding of the complexity of the problems, Colonel White said. The logistics officer must be a real professional. Sterilizing further complicates the problems. An understanding of the long lead time necessary in logistics is essential. Grabbing emergency stuff off the shelves is no longer possible. Many things have to be manufactured. CIA has been security conscious lately, Colonel White said. The Agency in examining itself has a right to be proud of its security setup. Within that setup, too, as much time is spent on proving that an accusation is unfounded as in pinning something on the accused. The setup includes no Gestapo. So far, every investigation of the Agency has resulted in a clean bill of health. To keep it clean, though, supervisors must work hard to forestall any possibility of defection. Insurance is in knowing our own people. What is this fellow really like? The question is bigger than just does he do his job well. Do you as a supervisor really know your people? Here is a relation to leadership that the Agency must have.

Communications is constantly growing. It now absorbs ten per cent of both Agency personnel and cost, Colonel White said. Its activities range from operating eight radio stations to maintaining world-wide communication with field stations and bases. Here, some way to stop the flood of cabled matter must be found.

In the personnel area, there has always been the question of whether the director of personnel should rule with a heavy hand or whether he should render a service, Colonel White pointed out. The present attitude is that supervisors are the real officers of personnel and that there is no substitute for this line commander. The director of personnel is a service officer, and service should be the keynote of his personnel activities. Of course, he leads in making policy.

CIA uses the general counsel as the Government uses the Comptroller General. If the Agency wants to spend money, it asks him for an opinion. He has no precedents to follow in rendering it. Useful as guides, his opinions are recommended for reading and study. And, too, no problem is too small for his consideration.

In the area of legislative liaison, the Agency has done well. The interest of the Congress is high. In the last year the Director has made 30 appearances there, and Agency stature has grown. CIA trouble with the Congress lies in what members do not know, not in what they know. In

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appearing before Congressional committees, representatives of the Agency have brought it out in good shape.

The Director can spend money without outside audit, Colonel White pointed out. This unvouchered side, DD(S) audit office audits. Last year, the General Accounting Office moved in; it could audit the vouchered. It does not want to stop there; it wants to do a "comprehensive" audit. In the support services, it wants to know what all money is being used for. Here the centralization of DD(S) complicates matters. Incidentally, the audit done by DD(S) on the covert side was better than the one done by the General Accounting Office on the overt side.

In the medical office emphasis has shifted from people coming in to those that are in. Among those coming in, the Agency is in a position to pick and choose. From the health point of view, the medical office still helps in that process. More careful scrutiny, however, is being made of dependents on leaving for overseas. There are plans under way to scrutinize them on return. Cognizance is being taken also of the growing importance of psychiatry.

In automatic Agency processing, there is a lot of interest in machines, Colonel White said. Their development and use must be encouraged. Without them, if trends keep up, the Agency will not be able to operate in the field; all employees will be in Washington filing papers. The use of machines leads directly to manpower planning, a most important activity. With pressure on to cut the size of the Agency, its job must be done with fewer persons. The size was cut one percent in 1959 and two percent in 1960. The demand for a three percent cut in 1961 was rejected.

In the future then the Agency will have to give more attention to budgets, will have to cut red tape, and will have to show greater appreciation for management development, Colonel White indicated. Everybody in the Agency is a manager. Development as such did not amount to much until 1955. Excellent training is available. Too often, though, it is the crash sort and consequently not in sufficient depth. Particularly in the past two or three years, people are trying to figure out ways of doing things. Such indications of management development consciousness are particularly important to all in a supervisory capacity.

In answer to questions asked him, Colonel White called attention to difficulties in developing simple and direct and few regulations for a big organization. He saw hope in the fact that in making changes required by law, there is now no need for coordination, a complicated process too often wasteful of time and energy. He also saw hope in his own readiness, when possible, to make just exceptions to regulations.

About the Agency's moving into the new building, Colonel White said that the building had been promised for occupancy by 1 August 1961. Since contractors do not always meet schedules, the moving date will probably be two months later. All those going into the new building should be there a few months after early 1962. Most of DD(I) and DD(P) will move in, but only parts of DD(S).

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